

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	The Sherwood School
Headteacher:	Andriana Samouel
RRSA coordinators:	Kamaldeep Matharu and Lucinda Varchione-Francis
Local authority:	Merton
Assessor(s):	Anita Haigh
Date:	11 th July 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessor would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, staff and governors for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and children during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the assessment visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

It was evident that children’s rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- Secure knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- Strong strategic commitment to the values and principles of the CRC.
- Mutually respectful and supportive relationships.
- Excellent pupil voice and participation in decision-making.
- Systematic approach to teaching about the articles and Global Goals (GGs) across the curriculum.

Outcomes for Strands A, B and C have all been achieved.

2. MAINTAINING GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING STATUS

Our experience has shown that there are actions that have proven useful in other RRSA schools and settings in helping them to maintain and build on their practice at Gold level. Here are our recommendations for your school:

- Consider how to develop a structured progression for learning about rights, appropriate to children’s age and ability, to develop a more nuanced understanding of rights and how they apply in a range of contexts.
- Further develop children’s understanding of the language of rights, for example, duty bearers, rights holders, social justice and equity.
- Facilitate more opportunities for the children to initiate effective advocacy and campaigning work with regard to children’s rights, at local and global levels. Consider participating in Unicef UK’s [OutRight](#) Campaign.
- Consider how to develop an advocacy role with the local secondary schools, for example, through transition projects.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	The Sherwood School is a community primary school with 432 pupils on roll, aged 3-11 years. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is 23.1%. 41.2% of pupils speak English as an additional language, and 2.5% of pupils have an EHC plan. An Ofsted inspection in November 2017 graded the school as ‘good’ for overall effectiveness.
Attendees at SLT meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher, • 2 RRSA coordinators, of whom one is also assistant headteacher
Number of children interviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 RRSA ambassadors with a range of leadership roles • 17 Year 1-6 children in a focus group • 4 children on the learning walk • Approximately 60 children in class visits
Number of adults interviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 teaching staff • 2 support staff • 1 parent
Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence, class visits.
Registered for RRSA: 24 April 2014	Silver achieved: 21 June 2017

STRAND A: TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT RIGHTS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is made known to children, young people and adults, who use this shared understanding to work for improved child wellbeing, school improvement, global justice and sustainable development.

Strand A has been achieved

Children demonstrated a broad knowledge of the CRC and could cite over 20 different articles, often with the correct article number. They understood that these rights apply from birth to all children under the age of 18, cannot be taken away or earned and are of equal importance. While unfamiliar with the term ‘duty bearer’, they were aware that adults are primarily responsible for upholding their rights. They were aware of situations where children are not able to enjoy their rights, for example the impact of “*polluted air*”, “*dirty water*” and “*earthquakes*” on access to shelter, food, health care and safety. KS 1 children were able to explain what it means to be a refugee: “*It’s when you have to run away because you’re in danger.*”

Children have an evolving understanding of global issues and sustainable development through their ongoing exploration of the Global Goals (GGs). A creative whole school art project to introduce the GGs involved each class researching a particular goal inspired by an iconic work of art. For example, Y2 pupils reflected on Van Gogh’s painting, ‘Sunflowers’ to inspire their work on GG15 ‘Life on Land’. During a visit to a Y1 lesson, children were encouraged to think critically about what it means to have a ‘quality education’ (GG4) by looking at the similarities as well as the differences between a classroom in rural Kenya and their own classroom. The ‘Sherwood Values’, based on the statutory duty to promote ‘British Values’, include explicit reference to the school’s rights respecting approach. This supports children’s understanding of how democracy, mutual respect, individual liberty, tolerance and the rule of law relate to rights.

The school is committed to embedding a rights based approach in all aspects of school life. Senior leaders described the CRC as “*the bedrock of the school*” and “*integral to the way the school is run.*” Two key strands of the school’s strategic vision are ‘rights and respect’ and ‘global awareness’. The school improvement plan outlines specific actions to realise this vision, including ‘achieving RRS Gold award’ and ‘continue to promote an RRS ethos specifically targeting global and eco learning.’ Curriculum plans and assembly programmes reflect a systematic approach to teaching about rights and the Global Goals. In a year 6 maths lesson, children were learning how to interpret pie charts by comparing data about different forms of energy generation. This was linked to Article 24 and GG7. Some policies make explicit reference to the CRC; most state the school’s commitment to a rights respecting approach. The CRC is promoted through the school website, newsletters, staff training, parent workshops and the home-school agreement, and is highly visible throughout the school on displays and posters. The RRS ambassadors produce their own newsletter outlining their roles and current priorities, linked to articles and Global Goals. A parent commented, “*I always hear about it [CRC]. My child is teaching his cousins and the wider family about it!*” In addition, the headteacher has advocated for RRS at Local Authority behaviour management service meetings and cluster school training days.

STRAND B: TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH RIGHTS – ETHOS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Actions and decisions affecting children are rooted in, reviewed and resolved through rights. Children, young people and adults collaborate to develop and maintain a school community based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation; this includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners and promotes wellbeing.

Strand B has been achieved

Children described ways in which adults promote and uphold their rights, for example, by facilitating pupil voice through different pupil leadership teams, and ensuring their safety through safeguarding and security measures. They participate in evaluating progress regarding some of the school's key priorities. Children were confident that they could approach staff members if they felt that their rights were not being met. Staff members shared why teaching children about their rights is important: *"It gives them the vocabulary to talk about their concerns"* and to *"know they can have an impact."*

Children gave examples of how adults in school demonstrate fairness, such as ensuring pupils take turns to speak in class and listening to all parties in a dispute. While unfamiliar with the term 'equity', they understood that fair treatment takes account of an individual's needs, which might require different treatment or resources. In discussing a school scenario, children could identify differing needs and relevant rights to be considered by adults to ensure fair treatment.

The school has a strong sense of community. Relationships between adults and children are supportive and respectful. Children spoke positively about their experiences at school and about those who support them. They could discuss how the dignity of all is upheld by following the school's rights respecting charter: *"it reminds you how to act"*. They understood how this linked to the behaviour system and how poor choices impact on the rights of others to be treated fairly and with dignity. Through circle time, nurture groups and the house point system, rights respecting behaviours are modelled, recognised and rewarded.

When asked, children confirmed that they felt safe at school and were clear about approaching *"a trusted adult"* with any concerns. Children knew possible avenues for raising concerns, such as the Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), classroom worry monsters, and the safeguarding team. Posters with photos of the safeguarding team were visible throughout the school. Children discussed safety issues addressed in PSHE and through visits from external agencies, for example, from medical students from the local hospital and the community police officer. Topics covered include road safety, online safety and cyberbullying, *"stranger danger"* and first aid. The school is also part of the Anti-bullying Alliance. In addition, parent workshops address issues of safety.

Health and wellbeing is a strategic priority. Different aspects of health such as healthy eating, physical fitness and mental health are addressed through PSHE, PE and the Science curriculum, as well as through special days and events, such as 'Health and Wellbeing Week'. Children can access the 'Sunshine Room' during lunchtime to discuss issues that affect their emotional and mental health and wellbeing. The school is also involved in an NHS 'Trailblazer' mental health support project. A range of extracurricular activities such as sports clubs, debating, drama and RRS help to build children's confidence, resilience and social skills.

The school has a strongly inclusive ethos. The school community is culturally diverse. The school participates in a British Medical Association initiative to raise aspirations about careers in the medical profession among primary school pupils from under-represented backgrounds. Staff members take seriously their role as duty bearers in ensuring all children are valued and supported. A support assistant described her role as *“being an advocate for the child.”* Expressive arts are promoted to develop children’s talents and abilities, and to boost their aspirations and self-confidence. Free instrumental lessons and specialist teaching are provided for all children. The headteacher commented on the importance of *“an enriching curriculum so that the children get the best I can give”* and *“enabling children to have opportunities that they might otherwise not have.”* Weekly celebration assemblies recognise children’s achievements, and a ‘Star of the Week’ award is presented. House teams and classes are also rewarded for excellence in behaviour and attendance.

Children play an active role in making decisions about their learning. Pupil Leaders feed back children’s comments to senior leaders to inform future planning. Curriculum plans are adapted as a result. The ‘Reading Team’ comprises Pupil Ambassadors with a specific brief to look at the SIP priority to improve reading across the school. They devised an action plan with success criteria indicating the target percentages for children’s attainment at ‘age related expectations’ and ‘greater depth’. They described a range of actions to realise this aim, such as creating book corners, peer reading, reading competitions, a book club and pupil-led assemblies to introduce the initiative. The school advocates a ‘growth mindset’ approach with visible in eye-catching displays around the school. Children could explain what this means in practice and understood their own agency in their learning.

STRAND C: TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR RIGHTS – PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT AND ACTION

Children are empowered to enjoy and exercise their rights and to promote the rights of others locally and globally. Duty bearers are accountable for ensuring that children experience their rights.

Strand C has been achieved

Pupil participation and leadership are highly valued. The School Council is an elected body with representatives from each class. The Council is divided into teams of ambassadors with particular areas of responsibility: learning (currently reading), charity (currently WaterAid), sustainability and RRS. For example, the RRS team lead assemblies on rights and decide which articles are relevant to add to displays. They have also planned and led workshops for parents and midday meals supervisors on RRS and children’s rights. In addition, an elected School Mayor and Deputy front whole school events such as the school talent show. House Captains and their Deputies encourage good attendance and behaviours and keep a weekly tally of house points for their teams. Other pupil leaders include Digital Leaders, Play Leaders and Lunchtime Monitors. Recent changes effected by pupil voice include a greater choice of meal options at lunchtime and raising money to fund improvements to the KS1 playground. A Pupil Ambassador commented, *“School is for children so we should have our voices heard.”*

Children are enthusiastic advocates for rights. In addition to raising money for various charities such as Macmillan Cancer Research, Jeans for Genes, Children in Need and Comic Relief, children have collected items for the local food bank. Through lessons and assemblies, children are encouraged

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to reflect on the purpose of their fundraising and the rights they seek to uphold. Following consultation with their peers, the RRS Ambassadors held a 'mufti day' to raise funds for an orphanage in Kenya. As part of Democracy Week, members of the School Council visited the Houses of Parliament and met with their local MP. They raised local issues of concern, in particular, tackling street refuse and improvements to the recycling scheme. Parents commented on their children having greater global awareness and a desire to be more sustainable at home: *"We have to implement it at home...we're reminded to turn off the taps!"*